

CCD BULLETIN

Issues in Coastal Community Development

FROM THE FIELD:

PROTECTING MAINE'S WORKING WATERFRONTS & COASTAL ACCESS

Working waterfronts and access to coastal resources are vital to the essence of coastal Maine. However, soaring shorefront real estate values and their associated property taxes are pricing many fishing and water-dependent businesses out of the market, and threatening recreational access to the coast. Traditional waterfront businesses are moving their establishments inland or seeking employment elsewhere, and many private wharves have been converted to homes or recreational facilities. Congestion and conflict among diverse users at municipal piers has increased dramatically, and lawsuits challenging public access to southern Maine beaches have the potential to negatively affect *Vacationland's* tourism economy.

The Marine Extension Team (MET), composed of extension agents from Sea Grant and Cooperative Extension, is working with a range of stakeholders to implement programming to address these issues, including targeted training opportunities and facilitation for several community dialogues. For example, the MET conducted a coastal access law and policy training session featuring presentations by faculty from the University of Maine Law School's Marine Law Institute, and partnered with others to host "Working Waterfront Access: A Forum on Challenges and Solutions". Governor Baldacci gave the keynote address for the forum, underscoring the importance of the issue to the state. The event fostered new partnerships for the development of a fisheries cooperative, and enabled communication among traditionally conflicting interests. In response to widespread feedback for additional structured dialogues on the topic, partnerships between the MET and local stakeholders have been created to implement similar events in Maine's Downeast and Southern regions, in which the MET serves as a non-partial entity to enable a solutions-oriented discussion.



The MET, local partners and Maine Sea Grant Communications' specialists have also developed several coastal access-related publications. In cooperation with the Marine Law Institute, *Public Shoreline Access in Maine: A Citizen's Guide to Ocean and Coastal Law* was designed to promote understanding of coastal rights and responsibilities, the role of traditional uses and the public trust doctrine, and recent coastal access court cases. Hundreds of individual requests for this publication have been made by town planning boards, recreational boaters, and college professors for use in their classes. Another example is *Moosabec: The Downeast Fishing Community of Jonesport and Beals*, a brochure developed by the MET, two Downeast towns and the Washington County Council of Governments. The *Moosabec* brochure was intended to open the lines of communication among newcomers, developers, and realtors regarding the importance of protecting the traditional waterfront character of Moosabec Reach, and is serving as a model for similar projects throughout the state.

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RECOMMENDED READING

Effectiveness of State Coastal Management Programs in Providing Public Access to the Shore: A National Overview

<http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/pdf/efaccess.pdf>

Written by Rhode Island Sea Grant as part of the National Coastal Zone Management Effectiveness Study, this report discusses how well state coastal management programs are providing public access to the coast.

The Effectiveness of Coastal Zone Management Programs in Redeveloping Deteriorating Urban Ports and Waterfronts

<http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/pdf/efwaterfront.pdf>

From Washington Sea Grant and the University of Washington as part of the National Coastal Zone Management Effectiveness Study, this report discusses the effectiveness of urban waterfront redevelopment projects from throughout the country.

Preserving Commercial Fishing Access: A Study of Working Waterfronts in 25 Maine Communities

mainegov-images.informe.org/spo/mcp/downloads/waterfront_study/preserving_commercial_fishing.pdf

This study was conducted by Coastal Enterprises, Inc. for the Maine State Planning Office Coastal Program. The report focuses specifically on access for commercial fishing operations along Maine's coastline, and investigates the current (2002) status of coastal access, waterfront planning, development pressures, and efforts undertaken by the surveyed towns to retain fishing access.



COMMUNITY TOOL SHED

Working Waterfronts Initiative Webpage

Maine State Planning Office

www.state.me.us/spo/mcp/wwi/community_actions.php

This comprehensive site provides information on all aspects of Maine's working waterfronts initiative, including waterfront planning, funding options, and case studies of various approaches used in the state to preserve traditional coastal uses and public access.



WORKING WATERFRONT PRESERVATION ACT

On September 19, 2005, Senator Susan Collins of Maine introduced the Working Waterfront Preservation Act. The primary purpose of the bill is to create a national program of matching grants to help the commercial fishing and aquaculture industries protect their access to coastal waters. The grants would be used to purchase private property at fair market value from willing sellers, allowing water-dependent businesses to better compete against growing development pressures along the coasts. It would also provide funding for improvements to existing waterfront facilities supporting these industries. The Working Waterfront Preservation Act would apply to all coastal states as defined by the Coastal Zone Management Act, and would authorize up to \$50 million for grants for two years, 2006 and 2007. To view the text of the Act, go to <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/C?c109:/temp/~c109w9oXG8>. To see the press release, go to <http://collins.senate.gov/high/record.cfm?id=246077>.